

# Blunt file reopened to probe role of former agent

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**T**HE Secret Service has re-opened inquiries into events surrounding the case of Anthony Blunt, the former Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures, who was exposed as a former Russian spy. The inquiries are believed to centre on one man, a former MI5 agent, and the role he played in the Blunt affair.

The Secret Service became suspicious of the former MI5 agent only recently, even though Blunt, now 74, was publicly exposed in 1979—15 years after he had been confronted with his activities on behalf of the KGB.

Blunt, who was stripped of his knighthood by the Queen and now shuns publicity, worked for many years inside MI5 and gave the Russians many of Britain's most closely-guarded secrets before and after the war.

The file on the Blunt affair and the way he was given immunity from prosecution in 1964 is being closely examined. Detailed inquiries, including checking the service record of a former MI5 agent, are being made. It is thought that he has recently been interviewed about the Blunt affair, although this cannot be confirmed.

## 'Under suspicion'

Whitehall sources said that as far as they could establish, the former MI5 agent was still a secret in his sixties, is only under suspicion. However, they admit that the fact that the Secret Service is making inquiries into his role in the affair confirms fears voiced at the time of Blunt's exposure that intelligence have never been fully satisfied that other KGB agents were not working inside MI5.

When the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions was asked about a new investigation into the Blunt affair, in particular the role of a former MI5 agent, a spokesman said: "We can neither confirm nor deny that an investigation is being carried out or has been carried out."

When Blunt was given immunity from prosecution in 1964, the head of MI5 was Sir Roger Hollis.

1973, but there have been unsubstantiated allegations since that he was involved with the Russians.

The way Blunt was given immunity has been criticised.

It is obvious that the present inquiry will go deeply into the immunity question and whether any other agents were involved.

## MPs' concern

OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT writes: Although there was no official confirmation in Whitehall last night that the new inquiry was under way, it was being emphasised that the files on Blunt and Hollis remained under constant scrutiny.

Some Government sources also made clear that they believed the security services might well have decided to reopen the case, particularly in view of the fact that new revelations about MI5, and possible Soviet penetration at the centre of the services, were about to break.

The latest disclosures will almost certainly lead to fresh concern in Parliament over the Blunt case. A number of MPs have made clear that they still fear the true extent of Soviet penetration has not been revealed, despite detailed statements from Mrs Thatcher.

The Prime Minister is due to receive shortly a report from the Security Commission, headed by Lord Bridge, on the effectiveness of positive vetting procedures following the case of Geoffrey Prime, who was jailed for 38 years after admitting selling secrets from the Government's communications centre at Cheltenham to the Russians.

Any fresh revelations about spying, particularly if it involves the security services, is bound to increase parliamentary pressure from some independent watchdog to monitor their activities.